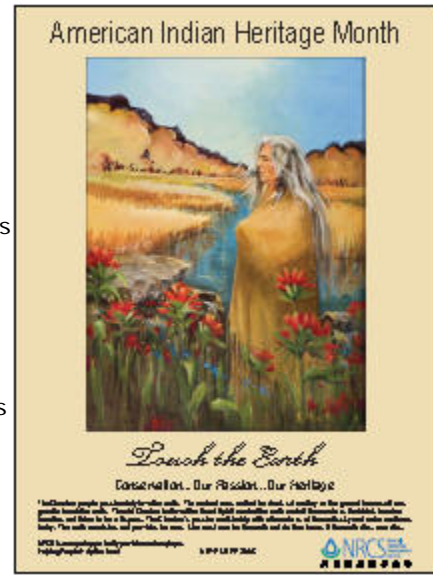


American Indian Heritage Month 2008

In 1986, President Reagan designated November 23-30 as "American Indian Week." Four years later, President Bush proclaimed the first National American Indian Heritage Month. Each year since, U.S. Presidents have proclaimed November as "American Indian Heritage Month."

NRCS recognizes and celebrates each year the many different cultures to which we have the opportunity to offer our services and programs to; including American Indians. This provides an opportunity to make people aware of the history of American Indians and their contributions to the world.



One of the ways NRCS nationally celebrates American Indian Heritage Month is by distributing a poster created by an American Indian artist. Each year, artists from selected states have the opportunity to exhibit his/her talents and heritage on a national level. For 2008, the South Central Region, which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas, was chosen for 2008 American Indian Heritage Month poster competition; with NRCS Arkansas the lead state to oversee the poster contest.

Winning Artist Kathy Staurch, Oklahoma

The winning artist for 2008 American Indian Heritage month poster is Kathy Staurch. Kathy is a member of the Choctaw Nation from Durant, Oklahoma.

The poster theme for this year's poster was Conservation.....Our Passion.....Our Heritage. Kathy Staurch titled her painting Touch of Earth....Conservation.....Our Passion....Our Heritage and she illustrated the connection the theme has with Choctaw's kinship with all creatures, earth, sky, water and the Indian Paintbrush in the foreground is symbolic of American Indians; natural, sturdy, proud and beautiful.

The narrative from the poster says, "The Choctaw people passionately love the earth. The ancient ones walked barefoot, sat and lay on the ground because it was good to touch the earth. The old Choctaw believed the Great Spirit created the earth and all the creatures that drink from her bounties and listen to her whispers. The Choctaw's passion and kinship with all creatures of the earth, sky and water continues today. The earth nourishes and provides for man. Man must care for the earth and do it no harm. If the earth dies, man dies."

[2008 American Indian Heritage Month Presidential Proclamation](#)